

Recognizing Signposts: Anticipating the Future Role of the Corps

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Abstract

RECOGNIZING SIGNPOSTS: ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE CORPS, SAMS MONOGRAPH by MAJ Desmond V. Bailey, US ARMY, 48 pages.

By examining four historical contexts featuring corps headquarters performing their doctrinal roles, this study identified three signposts that assist practitioners with anticipating the future role of a corps headquarters at onset and throughout the duration of a campaign. These signposts are the nature of the conflict, the campaign objectives by phase, and the theater structure. Using these signposts as a framework for historical analysis, the assessment demonstrates that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with multiple divisions and corps, then a corps headquarters will perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters. When the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of small-scale offensive and defensive operations with one division and one corps headquarters, the corps headquarters will perform the role of a joint task force headquarters. However, when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time, followed by transition to its role as a land component command headquarters.

The purpose of this study is not to provide a Nostradamus-style prediction of the future role of a corps headquarters. However, since preparing to perform multiple roles effectively presents numerous training challenges, the study provides future corps practitioners with a historical framework for inquiry that can assist with anticipating the future role of a corps headquarters. To validate the framework logic, the study presented analysis of four historical contexts featuring the corps headquarters performing single or multiple doctrinal roles.

The structure of the study describes the four doctrinal roles a corps headquarters may perform, incorporating historical contexts, while using the three signposts as the framework for analysis and synthesis. The first section describes the role and functions of a corps as an intermediate tactical headquarters and uses Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical contexts for analysis. The second section describes the role and functions of a corps as a joint task force headquarters and uses Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical context for analysis. The third section describes the role and functions of a corps as a land component command with Army force responsibilities and uses Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical context. The final section provides conclusions and recommendations based on analysis and synthesis of the findings in the previous three sections.

Based on the assessment, and supported by the *2010 Army Operating Concept*, the future role of a corps headquarters is to function as either a joint task force, or a land component command. To perform either role effectively requires corps headquarters, as well as higher commands such as combatant commanders and theater armies, to focus on three areas; training for both roles, adequate preparation time, assisting with manning requirements, and providing the requisite experience level to achieve campaign objectives.

Recognizing Signposts: Anticipating the Future Role of the Corps

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Introduction

[Under Napoleon] each corps operated independently, yet all were also expected to respond to a single grand design and usually did so...Their roles, too, were subject to constant and endless variation; a corps might find itself acting as a hammer on one day, then serving as an anvil on the next. A corps employed to cover a strategic enveloping maneuver during the first phase of a campaign might well find itself in the vanguard of the advance in the second, only to be relegated to the role of occupation force in the third.

Martin Van Creveld¹

U.S. Army *Field Manual 100-15, Corps Operations (FM 100-15)*, 1997 describes the corps as “the largest tactical unit in the U.S. Army” which “conducts force-projection operations as part of a joint force and translates the broad strategic and operational objectives of higher echelons into specific and detailed tactics.”² However, between Operation Desert Storm 1991 and the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, corps headquarters have performed multiple roles throughout the duration of a campaign, such as an intermediate tactical headquarters, a joint task force headquarters, and as a multinational land component command, while functioning at the operational and strategic levels of war. Although each of these roles is a doctrinal role for a corps headquarters, the training focus, manning requirements, and requisite experience levels among the commander and staff vary greatly due to the specific functions and responsibilities associated with each role; a hard lesson learned during the previous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2005, U.S. Army *Field Manual 1, The Army (FM-1)*, initiated a change to the structure of the Army – transformation to a modular force. Additionally, *FM 1* added emphasis on higher Army echelons (divisions, corps and theater armies) performing the role of a joint force headquarters. In 2008, U.S. Army *Field Manual 3-0.1, The Modular Force (FM 3-0.1)* further

¹ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 61.

² U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-15, Corps Operations, October 1997* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 1-1, 1-2. *FM 100-15* is currently under revision as *FM 3-90.2, Corps Operations*, and has a distribution restriction that prohibits reference or citation. Until the revision is complete, *FM 100-15* is the most current Army doctrine specifically addressing corps operations. Additionally, the 1997 version of *FM 100-15* does not account for Transformation and Modularity concepts initiated in 2005 and 2008 respectively.

described the Army's transformation to a modular force in detail, and stated that "between 2008 and 2010, the Army would replace Army of Excellence higher headquarters designs (largely focused on tactical war-fighting) with headquarters designed to provide command and control for full spectrum operations."³ Additionally, *FM 3-0.1* anticipated a corps headquarters' role evolving over the course of an operation by stating that "when required, the Department of the Army tailors the theater army with a corps headquarters to serve as an intermediate tactical level headquarters...as the major combat operation transitions to protracted stability operations, the corps headquarters may become the joint force headquarters or multinational land component headquarters."⁴ Performing multiple roles throughout the duration of a campaign consisting of full spectrum operations requires the corps headquarters to shift focus, from the tactical level of war to the operational and strategic levels. However, the ability to anticipate and effectively transition from one role to another has proven difficult for corps headquarters to accomplish during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The difficulty anticipating transition from one role to the next is due in part to a limited ability to train on all aspects of each role, minimal preparation time to effect the transition, and inadequate staff capacity due to shortage of personnel and lack of experience. While these are certainly critical requirements to ensure effective role performance, the fundamental cause of each is the failure to anticipate the initial and succeeding role of the corps headquarters given the evolving context of the conflict. Essentially it is a failure to identify the signposts along the road to war, and during the war, that indicate a change in role is approaching, and appropriate actions must be taken to ensure an effective transition occurs.

³ U.S. Army, *Field Manual 3-0.1, The Modular Force*, January 2008 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008), 4-1. U.S. Army *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, October 2008 (*FM 3-0*), defines full spectrum operations as when "Army forces combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results. U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, 3-1.

⁴ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 4-1.

This study identifies three key signposts along the road to war, and during the war, that indicate the starting role and potential role transition points for a corps headquarters. The aim is to assist commanders and staffs with anticipating the future role of the corps headquarters which in turn enables the development of appropriate training regimens and identification of manning requirements that ensure an appropriate mix of service personnel are available at the onset of a campaign and during transitions to other roles. To accomplish this aim, key signposts that indicate the initial and future role of a corps headquarters are identified using historical analysis of four wars featuring corps headquarters performing single and multiple doctrinal roles.

The assessment demonstrates that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with multiple divisions and corps, then a corps headquarters will perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters. When the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of small-scale offensive and defensive operations with one division and one corps, the corps headquarters will perform the role of a joint task force headquarters. However, when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time, followed by transition to a land component command headquarters. While this assessment supports *FM 100-15* and *FM 3-0.1* with respect to the evolving role of a corps headquarters throughout the duration of a campaign, it further highlights three key signposts that assist corps headquarters practitioners with identification of the initial role and subsequent transition between roles, as well as historical challenges associated with each transition.

To assist practitioners with anticipating the initial role and potential role transition points, the study uses three signposts that form a framework for inquiry; these are the nature of the operational environment, the campaign plan, and the theater structure. The nature of the

environment describes the general type of warfare in terms of traditional or irregular, and addresses the adversary/threat capabilities; the campaign plan describes the focus of the campaign phases in terms of offense, defense, stability or a combination of the three; and the theater structure describes the echelons of command involved, and their roles and functions within the theater of operations.⁵ Additionally, each signpost is used to frame the doctrinal and historical context for each war examined, as well as assist with identifying the factors that affect the role of a corps headquarters.

The study describes the four doctrinal roles a corps headquarters may perform within a historical context using the signposts as the framework for inquiry within each section. The first section describes the role and functions of a corps as an intermediate tactical headquarters and uses Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical contexts for analysis. The second section describes the role and functions of a corps as a joint task force headquarters and uses Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical context for analysis. The third section describes the role and functions of a corps as a land component command with Army force responsibilities and uses Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical context. The fourth and final section provides conclusions and recommendations based on analysis and synthesis from the previous three sections.

The Corps as an Intermediate Tactical Headquarters

This section demonstrates that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with multiple divisions and corps, then a corps headquarters will perform the role of an

⁵ U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Joint Publication 3-33, Joint Task Force Headquarters*, February 2007 (St Louis, MO: U.S. Army AG Publication Center SL, 2007), I-4. To assist with developing a framework for analysis, the study incorporates several criteria from *JP 3-33* that are used when organizing, staffing and developing command relationships between joint forces and subordinate organizations. These are the nature of the crisis, mission assigned, makeup of existing and potential adversaries, and the time available to achieve the endstate.

intermediate tactical headquarters. This is accomplished by initially describing the doctrinal requirements for a corps headquarters performing the role of an *intermediate tactical* headquarters, followed by an examination of corps headquarters performing this role within the historical contexts of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Operation Desert Storm features two U.S. corps performing the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters for the duration of the campaign, while Operation Iraqi Freedom features one U.S. corps performing the role of an *intermediate tactical* headquarters during the initial phases which focused primarily on offensive and defensive operations prior to the transition to a greater emphasis on stability operations.

The term *intermediate* officially entered Army doctrine in 2008 when U.S. Army *Field Manuals 3-0, Operations*, and *3-0.1, The Modular Force* were published.⁶ Both field manuals state that a corps headquarters performs this role when “large land forces (two or more divisions) are employed during an operation and require an intermediate echelon between the divisions that control brigade combat teams and the theater army serving as the land component commander.”⁷ As this is a tactical level role, the corps commands and controls engagements and battles, provides subordinate commands (divisions and brigade combat teams) with the combat power required to fight engagements and battles, and plans for future engagements that develop into major operations contributing toward achieving campaign objectives.⁸ Within the theater

⁶ FM 100-15 describes the corps as the largest tactical unit in the Army and that is sometimes fights as “part of a larger ground force,” however, it does not use the term *intermediate tactical*. U.S. Army, *FM 100-15*, 1-1 - 1-3.

⁷ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, C-4 and *FM 3-0.1*, 4-1. Additionally, U.S. Army, *Field Manual 1-02, Operational Terms and Graphics*, September 2004 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004) defines an echelon as “a separate level of command. As compared to a regiment, a division is a higher echelon; a battalion is a lower echelon.” With respect to the corps, higher echelons includes the Theater Army, Joint Force Commander (which may be the Joint Force Land Component Commander, Joint Task Force Commander) and the Combatant Commander. U.S. Army, *FM 1-02*, 1-67.

⁸ FM 3-0 defines engagements as “a tactical level conflict, usually between opposing lower echelon forces. Engagements are typically conducted at the brigade echelon and below. Battles are defined as a set of related engagements that last longer and involve larger forces than an engagement.” U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, 6-3.

structure, in this role the corps’ “relieves the joint force land component commander from planning and synchronizing multiple land operations conducted by large formations.”⁹ This requires the corps headquarters to exercise operational control or tactical control of multiple divisions, including multinational forces or Marine Corps units.¹⁰ Figure 1, The Corps Headquarters as an Intermediate Tactical Headquarters, depicts the theater structure in which the corps headquarters is subordinate to a joint force land component headquarters, and exercises command and control of multiple divisions.

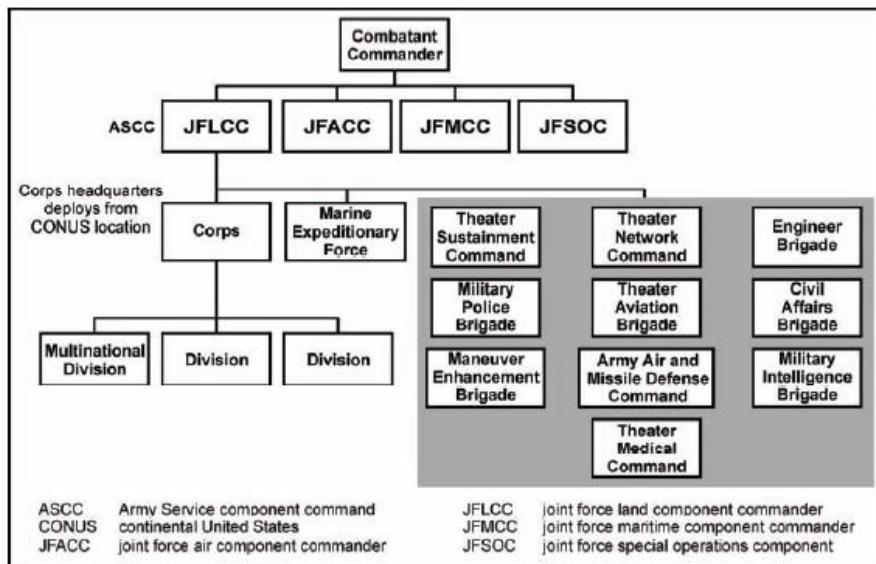


Figure 1- The Corps Headquarters as an Intermediate Tactical Headquarters¹¹

While Figure 1 depicts the Combatant Commander as the highest commander within the theater structure for this example, a subordinate joint force or subordinate unified command could be

⁹ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 1-10.

¹⁰ *FM 3-0* defines operational control as “the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish missions.” Tactical control is defined as “being inherent in operational control, and provides sufficient authority for controlling and directing the application of force or tactical use of combat support assets within the assigned mission and task. Tactical control does not provide organizational authority or authoritative direction for administrative and logistic support.” U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, C-4, B-6.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 4-2.

established between the Combatant Commander and the component commands. For the following historical contexts of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Figure 1 reflects the general theater structure for U.S. forces during both conflicts, with the participating corps headquarters performing the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters.

Desert Storm, 1990-1991

Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm presented U.S. and coalition forces with traditional warfare between nation states with large-scale conventional forces. The campaign objectives developed following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait required the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, followed by the establishment and security of a demilitarized zone; thus the war would require primarily large-scale offensive and defensive operations. This resulted in the development of a theater structure that required two U.S. corps, the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps, to function as the intermediate echelon between multiple divisions and the Theater Army. Additionally, due to the three roles performed by Third Army for the duration of the campaign, both U.S. corps remained focused and offensive and defensive operations while functioning as intermediate tactical level headquarters.

In the summer of 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) deployed forces as part of a strategic response to defend Saudi Arabia, and began planning for offensive and defensive operations to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. As General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, the commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) at the time, recalls in his memoirs, President Bush stated that the objective was “the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait.”¹² Since Iraq’s military forces were of a conventional nature, their removal from Kuwait required the employment of a large -scale

¹² Peter Petre, *General Norman H. Schwarzkopf: The Autobiography; It Doesn’t Take a Hero* (New York: Batnam Books, 1992), 316.

coalition ground forces to address the military threat posed by the number and type of Iraqi forces present in southern Iraq and Kuwait.¹³ So at the onset of the war, U.S. forces were presented with traditional warfare between two nation states. Fortunately, the CENTCOM planners had anticipated traditional warfare within this region prior to the Iraqi invasion.

Before the Iraqi invasion in mid-July 1990, Third Army, the XVIII Airborne Corps, and select Air Force, Navy and Marine staffs participated in a planning exercise named INTERNAL LOOK.¹⁴ The exercise reflected a three phase operation with one corps and exercised deployment to Saudi Arabia, defense, followed by a counteroffensive into Kuwait.¹⁵ The results of the INTERNAL LOOK exercise identified that the U.S. force “lacked adequate armor forces required for defense and counteroffensive operations against the opposing Iraqi armor.”¹⁶ Following the Iraqi invasion, CENTCOM considered a two-corps attack versus a one-corps attack to address this shortcoming. With the first phase of the operation, Desert Shield, having commenced August 1990 in response to the invasion, the decision to employ the two-corps option was made in October 1990, and the VII Corps was notified on November 1990 that it would deploy to Saudi Arabia in support of the ongoing defensive effort and future offensive operations.¹⁷ Conceptually, the decisive operation for Operation Desert Storm was the destruction of Iraq armored forces in Iraq with two U.S. corps. The XVIII Airborne Corps would fix the Republican Guard forces in Iraq while VII Corps destroyed the forces in their positions. Shaping operations consisted of the

¹³ Richard M. Swain, “*Lucky War*” Third Army in Desert Storm, (Kansas: Command and General Staff College Press, 1997), 2-3, 291, 307.

¹⁴ As General Schwarzkopf explains, “CENTCOM’s wartime mission was to stop the Red Army from seizing the precious oil fields of Iran. Peter Petre, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 285. According to Swain, “The INTERNAL LOOK exercise was designed to test Central Command’s staff and Army component command, Third Army, concepts for a war in the Middle East. Initially, developed to address a Soviet attack through Iran into the Persian Gulf region, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, the INTERNAL LOOK exercise reflected a refined scenario based on the defense of Saudi Arabia, and offensive operations designed to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait.” Swain, *Lucky War*, 1-11.

¹⁵ Swain, *Lucky War*, 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁷ Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College Press, 1993) 132-133.

Marine Expeditionary Force isolating Kuwait City, while the Arab Islamic forces cleared Iraqi forces within the city. The forces available to accomplish the decisive operation consisted of two U.S. Army corps, one U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force, one French Division, one British Division, and the Arab-Islamic forces that consisted of ground forces from Egypt, Syria and Royal Saudi Land forces.¹⁸

The theater structure developed to provide command and control for the large number of U.S. and coalition forces required the XVIII Airborne and VII Corps to perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters and focus primarily on tactical level offensive and defensive operations. This was primarily due to the three roles performed by Third Army which were the army component headquarters (ARCENT), Army Forces headquarters (ARFOR), and field army.¹⁹ Under these three roles, Third Army was responsible for dividing resources among war-fighting units in accordance with the campaign plan; planning the ground operations, coordinating joint, and coalition operations and host nation support, as well as commanding both U.S. corps and the Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF).²⁰ Additionally, Third Army developed the Coalition Coordination Integration Center (C3I) which provided a conduit for host-nation military coordination.²¹ Hence, Third Army's multiple roles enabled both corps headquarters to

¹⁸ Swain, *Lucky War*, 73, 238 and Scales, *Certain Victory*, 140.

¹⁹ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 57. According to Scales, Third Army was in command of the two U.S. corps, but General Schwarzkopf retained the land component command responsibilities, as he did not want to create another headquarters to perform the role of land component command. The primary driver for this decision was due to the limited resources available, and the number of roles Third Army was required to perform. Bourque also acknowledges Third Army's multiple roles during Desert Storm and explains that the role of Field Army required Third Army to "direct ground operations, allocate combat units to the corps and plans subsequent operations" for the U.S. forces involved in the operation. So while Third Army was in control of the two U.S. corps, General Schwarzkopf coordinated the efforts of both U.S. and Arab-Islamic forces. Stephen A. Bourque, *JAYHAWK: The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2002), 24-26.

²⁰ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 57.

²¹ Swain, *Lucky War*, 53-56. According to Scales, the Coalition Coordination Integration Center was developed to unburden the corps commanders from diplomatic chores because the theater army performed the administrative and diplomatic coordinating functions. Scales, *Certain Victory*, 58.

remain focused on the tactical aspects of the campaign plan, primarily the destruction of Iraqi forces and the defense of Kuwait when offensive operations were complete.

Following a successful 41 day air campaign and 100 hour ground war, the objectives of the impending cease-fire agreement between the U.S./Coalition and Iraq changed the mission of U.S./Coalition forces, but not the role of the corps. The military objectives developed in response to President Bush's postwar objectives stressed defense of Kuwait, establishment of a demilitarized zone and transition control to a United Nations Command, protecting displaced civilians, and the redeployment of forces.²² Prior to the cease-fire talks, General Schwarzkopf decided the XVIII Airborne Corps would be the first corps to redeploy, and VII Corps would assume occupation duties in southern Iraq.²³ However, the occupation duties required VII Corps to provide security for humanitarian assistance operations and provide movement control and security for displaced civilians; hence the occupation duties reflected defensive operations more so than stability operations.²⁴ As Third Army assumed responsibility for establishing the demilitarized zone, and conducting security and reconstruction efforts within Kuwait; VII Corps continued to conduct occupation duties and defend Kuwait from within southern Iraq until it redeployed in June 1991.²⁵

Desert Storm Signpost Summary

The historical analysis of Operation Desert Storm provides three signposts for corps headquarters role identification as an intermediate tactical headquarters. Specifically, these were a

²² Swain, *Lucky War*, 319-320; On 7 March, 1991, President Bush conveyed his postwar objectives to Congress, which provided for shared regional security, control of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, a commitment to leave no regional forces in Iraq, and naval presence in the area. Swain, *Lucky War*, 319-320.

²³ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 338.

²⁴ Ibid, 330-332. Additionally, Bourque explains that VII Corps' tasks during postwar operations consisted of maintaining military pressure on Iraqi forces in southern Iraq, clearing the battlefield of serviceable Iraqi equipment, and helping thousands of refugees fleeing the turmoil to the north. Bourque, *JAYHAWK*, 413.

²⁵ Scales, *Certain Victory*, 334-339.

pre-existing OPLAN designed for a traditional large-scale war in the region; campaign objectives that required the conduct of primarily offensive and defensive operations to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait; and a theater structure that required an intermediate echelon between the multiple divisions and the theater army. The first signpost was presented when the CENTCOM commander and staff anticipated traditional warfare within this region prior to the Iraqi invasion. Although the original OPLAN was designed to defeat a Soviet threat in the region, the fact that Iraq's military essentially mirrored the Soviets, with respect to doctrine and equipment type, indicated that a war in the region would most likely be of a traditional nature. The second signpost was presented following the Iraqi invasion in the form of President Bush's political objectives which required the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This lead to the development of campaign objectives that required primarily offensive and defensive operations to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait, as well as defend Kuwait during establishment of the demilitarized zone. The third and final signpost was also presented following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, when through the INTERNAL LOOK exercise conducted six months prior to the start of the ground campaign, the CENTCOM commander and staff determined the number of collation forces required to achieve the campaign objectives. Aside from requiring multiple divisions, the two-corps option was selected as well, meaning that both corps would function as the intermediate echelon between the divisions and the theater army. Thus, Operation Desert Shield/Storm demonstrates that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with more than two divisions, and the theater structure requires an intermediate echelon between divisions and the theater army, then the corps headquarters will perform the role of an *intermediate tactical* level headquarters.

Iraqi Freedom, 2003

Operation Iraqi Freedom presented U.S. and coalition forces with traditional warfare between nation states with large-scale conventional forces in primarily offensive and defensive operations during the initial phases of the campaign plan. The capabilities of the Iraqi military required U.S. and coalition forces to conduct large-scale offensive operations with one U.S. corps (V Corps), and one Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), both of which provided an intermediate echelon between the divisions and the coalition land component command. Because the campaign objectives required the defeat of Iraqi military forces and removal of the Saddam Hussein regime, the initial phases of the campaign focused on large-scale offensive operations, followed by a transition to stability operations. As such, for the initial phases of the campaign V Corps performed the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters; however, once Iraqi forces were defeated, V Corps was required to transition to a coalition joint task force and focused primarily on stability operations. In order to remain oriented on the role of a corps as an intermediate tactical headquarters, the following paragraphs focus on the signposts that indicated V Corps would perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters during the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The signposts that led to V Corps' transition to a coalition joint task force (CJTF) will be introduced in this section, but greater emphasis is provided in the next section which addresses the corps performing the role of a joint task force.

In response to Saddam's behavior since Operation Desert Storm, in October 2002 the Bush administration made the decision to go to war with Iraq.²⁶ The political objectives of what would be called Operation Iraqi Freedom required U.S. and coalition forces to defeat the Iraqi

²⁶ Donald P. Wright and Colonel Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: the United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 9-14. The United State's conflict with Iraq continued to elevate in intensity throughout the decade following Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, as Saddam Hussein continued to use his army to suppress Kurdish and Shi'i uprisings. In 1994, Saddam mobilized Iraqi army forces near the border of Kuwait, and in response the U.S. deployed troops to prevent an attack, and subsequently began developing military infrastructure, and stockpiling military equipment in Kuwait.

Army, remove the Baathist regime, secure and remove weapons of mass destruction, and secure Iraqi oil infrastructure with the overall aim of creating a stable, democratic Iraqi.”²⁷ According to General Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander at the time, “the military had two very clear goals for war with Iraq, regime forces defeated or capitulated, and regime leaders dead, apprehended or marginalized.”²⁸ So at the onset of campaign planning, the campaign objectives were primarily offensive and defensive in nature.

Preparations for Operation Iraqi Freedom began as early as August 2002, when V Corps began team building exercises with leadership from subordinate divisions and separate brigades focusing on command and control of large-scale ground forces.²⁹ In September 2002, V Corps, and selected subordinate command headquarters, deployed to Poland and conducted Exercise VICTORY STRIKE.³⁰ Additionally, Third Army, which would function as the coalition forces land component command (CFLCC), conducted exercise LUCKY WARRIOR, in Kuwait, which provided V Corps, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), and coalition forces the opportunity to practice operations that mirrored the evolving campaign plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom.³¹ The CFLCC campaign plan required V Corps and I MEF to attack into Iraq

²⁷ Wright, *On Point II*, 9-14.

²⁸ Tommy Franks and Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2004), 351.

²⁹ Colonel (Ret.) Gregory Fontenot, *On Point, The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 52. “General (Retired) Fred Franks, commander of VII Corps in Operation Desert Storm, was a senior mentor for General Wallace, V Corps’ commander, during the team building exercises.” Fontenot, *On Point*, 53. General Frank’s experience in Desert Storm was an intermediate tactical commander, and while his experience was valuable for V Corps leaders and planners for the initial phases of Operation Desert Storm, it would not serve V Corps well when transitioning from an intermediate tactical headquarters to a coalition joint task force upon completion of offensive operations, and the following year spent attempting to establish a secure environment to enable transition to stability operations. The significance of General Franks as a mentor is that the focus of V Corps was on the tactical level of war, maneuver of large scale forces, and destruction of the enemy.

³⁰ Ibid, 53. V Corps conducted additional training exercises to rehearse the evolving OIF plan. In late January and early February 2003, VICTORY SCRIMMAGE focused on large formation maneuver and logistics requirements over long distances. Another V Corps exercise, GOTHAM VICTORY, focused on urban combat.

³¹ Ibid, 53.

simultaneously, with V Corps attacking North and West of the Euphrates River as the main effort, while I MEF attacked North and East along the Tigris-Euphrates River valley.³² As each corps closed on Baghdad they would simultaneously destroy Iraqi forces, secure their lines of communication, control liberated portions of Iraq and conduct a “rolling transition to stability operations.”³³ Upon transition to stability operations, CFLCC would lead postwar operations, while V Corps would conduct stability operations in northern Iraq as a subordinate intermediate tactical headquarters.³⁴

The theater structure developed to provide command and control of coalition forces required V Corps and I MEF to function as an intermediate echelon between the divisions and the theater army. During the 2003 INTERNAL LOOK exercise, the theater structure was developed which grouped Air Force, Marine, and Navy air units into the Joint Force Air Component (JFACC); Special Operations Command created two subordinate Joint Special Operations Task Forces, (JSOTFs); and Third Army, as the CFLCC, consisted of V Corps and I MEF.³⁵ Hence, V Corps and I MEF were subordinate to CFLCC and remained focused on the tactical aspects of the campaign plan, primarily the destruction of Iraqi forces, and seizing Baghdad.

On March 19, 2003, V Corps and I MEF began the 400 kilometer assault to Baghdad. Throughout the attack north, V Corps and I MEF were responsible for securing the towns and cities between Kuwait and Baghdad, as well as their extended lines of communications. Once each had secured their objectives in Baghdad they prepared to conduct the rolling transition to

³² Fontenot, *On Point*, 55.

³³ Ibid, 55. While the concept of operations provides only a limited view of the tactical tasks V Corps was responsible for during the initial phases of OIF, V Corps FRAGO 149M provides a perspective of corps level current operations and future planning efforts when tasking 3rd Infantry Division to accomplish the following tasks: attack to establish Phase Line Dover; conduct reconnaissance in force to Objective Murray to cause the enemy to reposition forces and reinforce deception objectives; block highway 8 to prevent enemy infiltration into area of operations; be prepared to seize bridges over Euphrates River vicinity Objective Murray; For FRAGO 149 information see Fontenot, *On Point*, 259.

³⁴ Wright, *On Point II*, 27-29.

³⁵ Ibid, 14-28, 54. V Corps was composed of a Brigade Combat Team from the 82d Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division (ASSLT), the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), and the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized). I MEF was composed of the 1st Marine Division and 1st UK Armored Division.

stability operations in accordance with the CFLCC campaign plan.³⁶ However, at this point in the operation, a critical decision was made by the CENTCOM commander that would alter the CFLCC campaign plan and lead to V Corps transitioning from an intermediate tactical headquarters to a coalition joint force headquarters. Specifically, General Franks instructed CFLCC to begin redeployment operations, and instructed V Corps to transition from an intermediate tactical headquarters to a coalition joint task force (CJTF-7). According to General Franks, he realized that postwar operations would take a very long time, but he required Third Army to provide support for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁷ Additionally, General Franks felt that Ambassador Jerry Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority would provide the necessary skills and resources to lead the reconstruction effort, allowing V Corps to focus on providing security in conjunction with the Iraqi police and new Iraqi Army.³⁸ Consequentially, the transition from offensive operations to stability operations resulted in an unanticipated role transition for V Corps and numerous challenges which are addressed in the joint task force headquarters section.

Iraqi Freedom Signpost Summary

Operation Iraqi Freedom provides three signposts for corps headquarters role identification as an intermediate tactical headquarters. Specifically, these were a pre-existing OPLAN designed for a traditional large-scale war in the region; campaign objectives that required the conduct of primarily offensive and defensive operations to destroy Iraqi forces and remove the Saddam Hussein regime; and a theater structure that required an intermediate echelon between the multiple divisions and the theater army. The first signpost essentially existed since

³⁶ Wright, *On Point II*, 146.

³⁷ Franks, *American Soldier*, 530-534. Wright also states that the commander of U.S. Central Command, General Tommy Franks, “wanted Third Army/CFLCC out of Iraq as soon as possible and returned to its normal role in support of land operations throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, as Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan was ongoing, and required Third Army support.” Wright, *On Point II*, 28.

³⁸ Ibid, 530-534.

the end of Operation Desert Storm, as Iraq maintained its conventional military forces, albeit on a smaller scale. As such, the CENTCOM commander and staff anticipated that an invasion of Iraqi would initially consist of traditional warfare. The second signpost presented was the political objectives which required the destruction of Iraqi forces and removal of the Saddam Hussein regime. This led to the development of campaign objectives that initially required a greater focus on offensive and defensive operations. The third and final signpost was during campaign planning, when through several mission rehearsal exercises, the CENTCOM commander and staff determined the number of coalition forces required to achieve the campaign objectives. Although the initial scale of U.S. and coalition forces was much smaller than those employed during Operation Desert Storm, the number of divisions employed require V Corps and I MEF to function as the intermediate echelon between the divisions and the theater army. Thus, the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrate that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with more than two divisions, and the theater structure requires an intermediate echelon between divisions and the theater army, then the corps headquarters will perform the role of an *intermediate tactical* level headquarters.

Section Conclusions - Intermediate Tactical Headquarters

Historical analysis of Operation Desert Storm and the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom present practitioners with ideal signposts that assist with anticipating the role of a corps headquarters and an intermediate tactical headquarters. They are ideal in the sense that throughout the planning and deployment phases, both operations consisted of traditional warfare between nation states with large-scale conventional forces conducting primarily offensive and defensive operations; the planning and preparation times for both operations were relatively long (6 months for Operation Desert Storm, and arguably 12 years for Operation Iraqi Freedom); and both wars were fought against the same enemy. Hence, it was rather easy for practitioners to anticipate the

role of a corps headquarters for Operation Desert Storm, and quite frankly, Operation Iraqi Freedom required little to no anticipation to determine the initial role of a corps headquarters, as it was essentially Operation Desert Storm Part II. Consequentially, both historical contexts make it relatively easy to assert that when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with more than two divisions, and the theater structure requires an intermediate echelon between divisions and the theater army, then the corps headquarters will perform the role of an *intermediate tactical* level headquarters.

However, Operation Iraqi Freedom also demonstrated how a change to the theater structure affects the role of a corps headquarters. Hindsight being 20/20, future corps practitioners should inquire as to the future status of the theater army throughout planning, and while executing the campaign, in order to anticipate a future corps headquarters role transition. If the combatant command's area of responsibility has multiple combat operations ongoing, as was the case during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the theater army at some point may be required to provide support to both. If and when this occurs, the corps headquarters may be required to transition to the role of a joint task force; a transition that proved difficult for V Corps to accomplish due to a tactical level focus throughout the planning and preparation leading up to the onset of the war. The challenges experienced by V Corps during the transition to a joint task force headquarters are discussed in the next section, as well as two other historical contexts featuring the corps headquarters as a joint task force headquarters.

The Corps as a Joint Task Force

This section describes the doctrinal requirements for a corps headquarters performing the role of a joint task force headquarters (JTF), and examines corps headquarters performing this role within the historical contexts of Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This section demonstrates that when the operational

environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of small-scale offensive and defensive operations with one division and one corps, the corps headquarters will perform the role of a joint task force headquarters. However, this section also demonstrates that when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time until a four-star headquarters is established. The three historical contexts selected for assessment in this section feature corps headquarters performing the role of a JTF in small and large-scale operations. Operation Uphold Democracy and Operation Enduring Freedom provide examples of a corps headquarters performing the role of a JTF during the initial phases of a small-scale contingency operation; and Operation Iraqi Freedom provides an example of a corps headquarters transitioning from an intermediate tactical headquarters to a JTF for a short period of time during large-scale offensive and defensive operations until a four-star headquarters was established.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-33, Joint Task Force Headquarters (JP 3-33)*, February 2007 defines a JTF as “a joint force that is constituted and so designated by a joint task force establishing authority to conduct military operations or support to a specific situation, and is usually part of a larger national or international effort to prepare for, or react to that situation.”³⁹ With respect to a corps headquarters performing the role of a JTF, *JP 3-33* states this may occur “when the mission requirements are dominated by ground combat, the campaign objectives are limited, and centralized control of logistics is not required.”⁴⁰ In this role, the corps headquarters functions within the operational level of war, and is oriented on either

³⁹ U.S., CJCS, *JP 3-33*, xi and GL-14. Additionally, *JP 3-33* explains that a joint force is a general term applied to a force composed of two or more Military Departments operating under a single joint force commander.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, xi and II-2.

a geographical area, such as a joint operations area, or functional basis.⁴¹ The scope of responsibilities for a corps headquarters in this capacity may include “air, land, maritime, space, information and special operations in any combination executed unilaterally, or in cooperation with friendly nations, multinational forces, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations and other agencies.”⁴² Primary tasks for a corps headquarters performing this role consist of supervising all aspects of the joint task force planning efforts; development of campaign plans and time-phased force and deployment data; integrating joint operational planning with multinational planning at the operational level; coordinating with other forces and agencies not assigned or attached, including friendly forces, government officials, non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations; and providing joint operations area security.⁴³ According to doctrine, when a corps headquarters operates as a JTF, or a coalition joint task force (CJTF), it requires augmentation from other services and nations within the CJTF to transition to a functioning joint force headquarters. Figure 2 depicts the corps as a JTF headquarters, subordinate to a combatant command, with the theater army providing administrative control for all Army forces within the JTF.

⁴¹U.S., CJCS, *JP 3-33*, GL-16. Additionally, *FM 1-02* defines a JOA “an area of land, sea, and airspace defined by a geographic combatant commander or subordinate unified commander in which a joint force commander (normally a joint task force commander) conducts military operations to accomplish a specific mission.” U.S. Army, *FM 1-02*, 1-107.

⁴² U.S., CJCS, *JP 3-33*, I-3.

⁴³ *Ibid*, II-6, IV-12.

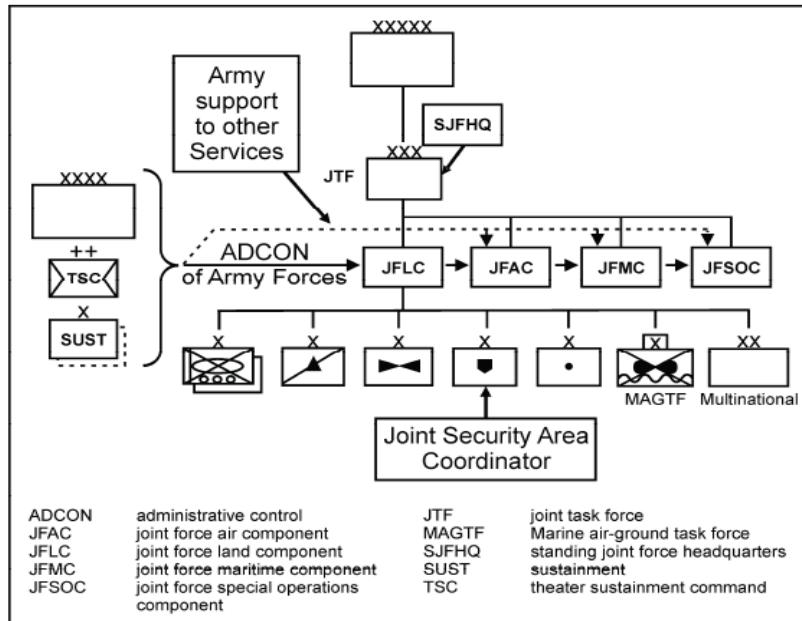


Figure 2 - The Corps Headquarters as a Joint Task Force Headquarters⁴⁴

The following sub-sections assess corps headquarters performing the role of a JTF during the initial phases of Operation Uphold Democracy, and during the transition from primarily offensive defensive operations to full spectrum operations in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Uphold Democracy, 1993-1994

Operation Uphold Democracy presented U.S. and coalition forces with a mix of traditional and irregular warfare between nation states with small-scale conventional military and police forces. While initially planned as a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO), the evolving situation in Haiti required the XVIII Airborne corps to plan for several contingency operations ranging from offensive operations to neutralize Haitian military forces and regime removal, to training the Haitian military and conducting civil-military operations in support of the Haitian government. Additionally, the anticipated short duration of the operation resulted in a

⁴⁴ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 4-1.

theater command structure that required XVIII Airborne corps to perform the role of a coalition joint task force (CJTF) that consisted of one division, one Marine Expeditionary Unit, naval logistical support, and several Special Forces organizations.

On September 30, 1991, the President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted by Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras.⁴⁵ In 1993, President Bill Clinton declared his intention to restore ousted President Aristide to power and rebuild the Haitian economy. According to planners at the National Security Council and USACOM, intervention in Haiti required the U.S. to either remove or retrain the Fad'H (Haitian military) and the Haitian Police in order to “create a secure environment for democracy to flourish once the Haitian junta was removed and the previous president, Aristade, was returned to power.”⁴⁶ Ineffective diplomatic measures with the Cedras regime led the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in late 1993, to change the planning focus from a NEO to a forcible entry operation.⁴⁷ The primary objectives were to “neutralize Haitian army forces and police, protect U.S. citizens and property, conduct a NEO, restore civil order, establish essential services, and set conditions for reestablishment of the legitimate government of Haiti.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵Walter E. Kretchik, Robert F. Baumann, and John T. Fishel, *A Concise History of the U.S. Army in Operation Uphold Democracy* (Fort Leavenworth KS: Command and General Staff College Press, 1998), 20, 32. Additionally, “in anticipation of a deteriorating situation in Haiti, the U.S. military began planning the same month for an evacuation of American citizens and selected third-party foreign nationals. During the later part of 1991 into early 1992, the 82d Airborne Division, a subordinate unit to the XVIII Airborne Corps, was identified as the primary force if a NEO was required. Concurrently, the U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) was developing a contingency option for a NEO in Haiti that employed U.S. Marines from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and anticipated a more permissive environment. However, planning by both organizations ceased in early 1992.” Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 32.

⁴⁶ Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 44.

⁴⁷ Aaron Wilkins, “The Civil Military Operations Center in Operation Uphold Democracy” (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1997), 5; Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 48. With respect to ineffective diplomatic measures, former President William Jefferson Clinton explains in his memoirs that he was “fed up with two years of working for a peaceful agreement” and that the Cedras regime continued to “intensify their reign of terror, executing orphaned children, raping young girls, killing priests, mutilating people and leaving body parts in the open to terrify others, and slashing the faces of mothers with machetes while their children watched.” Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Random House, 2004), 616.

⁴⁸ Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 47-48.

In January 1994, the commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps, Lieutenant General Henry H. Shelton, received notification of the contingency mission in Haiti, and that his corps would serve as JTF-180.⁴⁹ The initial concept required simultaneous airborne, air assault and ground assaults to secure key facilities, neutralize the Fad'H and police forces, and capture the current regime leader. This operation was initially planned by the XVIII Airborne corps and the 82d Airborne Division. However, in anticipation of decreased hostilities in May 1994, the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) that a “peaceful entry operation for Haiti was required, with an endstate of handing over the mission to the United Nations Mission in Haiti.”⁵⁰ At this point the XVIII Airborne Corps and the 82d Airborne Division were developing two contingency plans for Haiti, a forcible entry operations plan (OPLAN), and a peaceful entry OPLAN, the later requiring a longer period for execution. The forcible entry plan was expected to take 45 days to accomplish, while the peaceful entry plan was expected to take up to six months to accomplish.⁵¹ To relieve the planning requirements for the 82d Airborne Division, and ensure the division would not be involved in a long duration operation, U.S. Forces Command identified the 10th Mountain Division headquarters as the organization that would develop and execute the peaceful entry concept.⁵²

For both contingency operations, the theater structure required the XVIII Airborne Corps to perform the role of a CJTF-180. The major forces involved in the forcible entry contingency plan were an Army Force (ARFOR) consisting of the 82d Airborne Division, and a Joint Special

⁴⁹ Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 45-47.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 56-57. USACOM was the Commandant Command responsible for the Caribbean.

⁵¹ Wilkins, “CMOC in Operation Uphold Democracy,” 17.

⁵² Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 50-60. The 82d division commander’s intent was for the division to enter quickly, secure a lodgment, and secure the island, then six weeks later, hand over the operation to a follow-on force, such as the United Nations or U.S. Forces, Haiti. The 10th Mountain Division’s concept required the execution of offensive operations to establish security, followed by civil-military operations to re-establish the Haitian government and transition control of the operation to the United Nations Mission in Haiti. According to Wilkins, the 10th Mountain Division OPLAN “was envisioned to last a minimum of 179 days, and focused primarily on nation-building and humanitarian assistance.” Wilkins, “CMOC in Operation Uphold Democracy,” 17.

Operations Task Force composed of Army Rangers, Special Forces, and Navy SEALs. As planning continued, U.S. Marines, a Caribbean contingent (CARICOM) composed of forces from seven island nations, and a Multinational Observer Group (MOG) composed of forces from Canada, Argentina, France, and several other Caribbean nations, were added to CJTF-180 forces. The corps, employing its corps support command, would sustain the operation utilizing bases in North Carolina, South Carolina, Cuba and Puerto Rico. The 10th Mountain Division would function as the follow-on force headquarters and was designated CJTF -190. While subordinate to the XVIII Corps for planning and the initial phases of the operation, CJTF-190 would eventually function as the headquarters responsible for operations in Haiti.⁵³

On September 16, 1994, President Clinton initiated the Haiti forcible entry operation, to begin on 19 September. However, on September 17, President Clinton “sent former President Carter, Colin Powell and Sam Num to Haiti to try and persuade Cedras and his supporters to peacefully accept Aristide’s return and to depart from Haiti.”⁵⁴ By September 18, Cedras and former President Carter had negotiated a settlement, but military operations were already underway when CJTF-180 was notified. This required the CJTF-180 staff to cease military operations and generate a new plan for the following day. The new plan which was a hybrid of both the CJTF-180 and CJTF-190 concepts changed the mission from an offensive operation to a more limited approach within a more permissive environment. As a result of the negotiations, CJTF-180 would continue to command and control the initial stages of the operation, but without the 82d Airborne Division, while CJTF-190 would continue their deployment to Haiti and assume control of stability operations once the battle handover was complete with CJTF-180.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 50-73.

⁵⁴ Clinton, *My Life*, 616-617.

⁵⁵ Kretchik, *Operation Uphold Democracy*, 74-78.

Uphold Democracy Signpost Summary

Operation Uphold Democracy presented two signposts that demonstrate when the operational environment presents a mix of small-scale contingencies that require the conduct of primarily offensive and defensive operations; the corps headquarters performs the role of a joint task force headquarters. These were the nature of the operational environment and the theater structure. With respect to the nature of the operational environment, the Cedras regime consisted of a small military and police force that was far from being considered a competent conventional force. For U.S. and coalition forces to conduct either contingency required only one U.S. division as the primary ground force. Consequentially, the second signpost was the theater structure, which required the XVIII Airborne Corps to perform the role of a CJTF for either contingency, as each required one U.S. division (either the 82d or 10th), Special Forces, and various Coalition partners. Additionally, it is important to note that time available for planning was a critical factor that assisted corps practitioners with preparing to execute multiple contingencies. Specifically, the XVIII Airborne corps was notified of its role 9 months prior to mission execution. Early role identification, coupled with the parallel planning efforts between the corps staff, 82nd Airborne Division and 10th Mountain Division, enabled each organization to prepare for multiple contingencies and respond effectively to the evolving situation in Haiti. From a signpost perspective, practitioners should note that when the campaign objectives can be achieved by one ground division, in conjunction with smaller forces from other services and coalition forces, a corps headquarters may be required to function as a coalition joint task force.

Enduring Freedom, 2001-2002

In response to the 9-11 terrorist attacks, Operation Enduring Freedom presented U.S. and coalition forces with large-scale irregular warfare between a nation state and two threat organizations, the Taliban and al Qaeda. According to Donald Wright, the primary goal of the U.S. strategy in the emerging campaign against terrorism was to “disrupt and destroy the al-

Qaeda organization in Afghanistan and in other states that had granted al-Qaeda sanctuary.”⁵⁶ To achieve this aim, the initial U.S. and coalition forces deployed were a small-scale combination of conventional and unconventional forces conducting primarily offensive operations. However, as the campaign progressed, the need for greater emphasis on civil-military operations required the conduct of large-scale offensive operations to establish a secure environment. Since the initial JTF headquarters in Afghanistan, composed of the under-staffed 10th Mountain Division, lacked the capacity to coordinate large-scale offensive operations, the CENTCOM commander determined that a corps headquarters was required to perform the role of a coalition joint task force (CJTF).⁵⁷ With a short notification time of two months before deployment, and a force cap which limited the size of its staff, the XVIII Airborne corps deployed to Afghanistan in 2002 to conduct offensive operations and establish the conditions necessary to enable civil-military operations.

For the initial phase of Operation Enduring Freedom, which began in 2001, the 10th Mountain Division performed the role of a forward deployed headquarters for Third Army (referred to as Coalition Forces Land Component Command Forward CFLCC-Forward) which controlled all land forces inside Afghanistan. By early 2002, the nature of the threat in Afghanistan required the conduct of large-scale offensive operations for which the current theater structure was not effectively organized to facilitate. This led the 10th Mountain Division’s commander to request that CENTCOM designate his headquarters as a coalition joint task force.

⁵⁶ Donald P. Wright, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (U.S. Army Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College Press, 2010) 30. Reference the U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan. Additionally, General Tommy Franks, commander CENTCOM, states that “our military objectives in Afghanistan were relatively straightforward-to remove the Taliban Regime, destroy al Qaeda and its operating bases, and prevent resurgence of the terrorist support structure. Franks, *American Soldier*, 338.

⁵⁷ According to Sean Naylor, “The Pentagon’s-and, by extension, CENTCOM’s-obsession with minimizing the presence of U.S. conventional troops in Afghanistan translated into an arbitrary cap on the number of U.S. personnel that General Tommy Franks would allow on Afghan soil at any time.” Sean Naylor, *Not A Good Day To Die* (New York: Penguin Group, Inc, 2005) 19. Additionally, General Franks states that he Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, “agreed that we should not flood the country with large formations.” Franks, *American Soldier*, 324. The force cap restriction also applied to the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters as well.

The primary factor that led to this request was the requirement to coordinate and synchronize the actions of all U.S., coalition, and Special Forces within Afghanistan.⁵⁸ While this change to the theater structure proved effective initially, as the campaign progressed, and CENTCOM began to prepare for war with Iraq, General Tommy Franks wanted the campaign in Afghanistan to transition to the next phase and focus more on civil-military operations in support of the interim Afghan government.⁵⁹ However, this transition required a headquarters with the requisite experience to work with coalition partners and focus on strategic and operational level functions.⁶⁰

In June 2002, CJTF-180 became the headquarters responsible for the coalition's campaign in Afghanistan which was still focused primarily on offensive operations against the Taliban and al Qaeda forces.⁶¹ The initial task for CJTF-180 was to establish a theater structure that could facilitate the transition to full spectrum operations, and provide greater emphasis on stability and civil-military operations. This transition would require CJTF-180 to synchronize the efforts of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the newly created CJTF Phoenix (Afghanistan National Army training headquarters), as well as gain operational control of the Combined Joint

⁵⁸ Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 189.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 189-190, and Franks, *American Soldier*, 386-387.

⁶⁰ Wright, quoting General Franks, explains that the CENTCOM commander, "needed somebody on the ground that could handle the political aspects and it took somebody with more than a two-star rank." Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 190. General Franks elaborates on this requirement in his memoirs by describing the diplomatic negotiations required to maintain bases and over flight access, as well as coordinate humanitarian assistance efforts, coordinate with the United Nations and "scores of other nongovernmental organizations." Franks, *American Soldier*, 338. In short, as the campaign began to transition from strictly an offensive focus to a full spectrum operations focus, a more senior commander was required to coordinate the efforts of numerous military and non-military organizations involved with operations in Afghanistan, as well as relations with Pakistan.

⁶¹ In February 2002, General Franks asked Lieutenant General Dan K. McNeil, the XVIII Airborne Corps Commander, to travel to Afghanistan and assess the ongoing operations with the U.S. Ambassador to the government of Afghanistan. Upon his return he met with the Secretary of Defense, Chief of Staff of the Army and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was notified that XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters would deploy to Afghanistan and function as a coalition and joint task force headquarters, CJTF-180. The official Department of Defense notification occurred in March, 2002 and the corps began deployment in May 2002. Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 190-192.

Civil Military Operations Task Force, and the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan.⁶²

In effort to redistribute responsibilities within the theater, when the 10th Mountain Division Headquarters was replaced by the 82d Airborne Division in July 2002, Lieutenant General Dan McNeil tasked the 82d Airborne Division (CTF-82) to assume responsibility of all tactical level operations while CJTF-180 would focus on the operational and strategic level civil-military operations.⁶³ According to Lieutenant General McNeil, he envisioned his role transitioning from a focus on offensive operations to a broader focus on reconstruction efforts which included building a new Afghan Army, establishing relationships with the Afghan Transitional Authority, helping President Karzai develop the interim Afghan government's capacity, and facilitating negotiations with powerful regional leaders concerning integration into the new Afghan security structure.⁶⁴

By the summer of 2003, General McNeil envisioned the campaign gradually transitioning to the next phase which would focus on facilitating humanitarian assistance and providing military support to the Afghan Government. Despite the fact that Taliban and al Qaeda attacks were increasing, and the requirements to train the Afghan Army and rebuild critical infrastructure were increasing as well, CJTF-180 redeployed in the fall of 2003, as Operation Enduring Freedom became an economy of force mission due to the U.S. priority of focus on Operation Iraqi Freedom. CJTF-180 was replaced by the 10th Mountain Division; however, within the same year, the CENTCOM commander established a sub-unified three-star headquarters, the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A).⁶⁵ Composed of personnel from various service and

⁶² Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 211.

⁶³ Ibid, 211.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 209-211, 233. Additionally, General Franks elaborates on the aspect of negotiating with regional leaders as he describes Lieutenant General McNeil's role as participating in all CENTCOM planning sessions, and working with President Musharraf (Pakistan) and Hamid Karzai to coordinate and support offensive operations along the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders. Franks, *American Soldier*, 386-387.

⁶⁵ The CENTCOM Commander, General John Abizaid, wanted a new headquarters established that would focus on the political-military affairs within Afghanistan and build relationships with the new

coalition forces, the CFC-A provided oversight of civil-military operations, with an emphasis on the strategic and operational level aspects of the campaign, allowing subordinate division headquarters to focus on tactical level tasks of conducting full spectrum operations with a greater emphasis on providing security within Afghanistan.⁶⁶

Enduring Freedom Signpost Summary

Operation Enduring Freedom presented three signposts that demonstrate when the operational environment presents a mix of small-scale contingencies that require the conduct of primarily offensive and defensive operations; the corps headquarters performs the role of a joint task force headquarters. These were the nature of the operational environment, the campaign objectives, and the theater structure. With respect to the nature of the operational environment, as the campaign progressed through the initial phases, the Taliban and al Qaeda forces grew in number and fighting intensity. This required U.S. and coalition forces to conduct large-scale offensive operations. As a result, a change was made to the theater structure that created a CJTF, formed around the 10th Mountain Division, to plan, coordinate and synchronize large-scale offensive operations. Although the Taliban and al Qaeda forces continued to pose a significant threat to security within Afghanistan, the CENTCOM commander wanted the campaign to transition to full spectrum operations, with a greater emphasis on reconstruction efforts, building the new Afghan Army, and coordinating security efforts with regional leaders. According to the CENTCOM commander, this required a command with greater than a two-star rank. Thus the

Afghanistan government, and the U.S.-Afghanistan Embassy. Thus the Coalition Forces Command – Afghanistan (CFC-A), a three star command, was created in the fall of 2003. Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 320-322.

⁶⁶ Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 277. Additionally, the Near East Asia Center for Strategic Studies, when General David Barno assumed command of CFC-A in October 2003, he was responsible to U.S. Central Command for regional efforts in Afghanistan, most of Pakistan and the southern parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. His duties involved close coordination with the United States Department of State, the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, NATO International Security Assistance Force and the senior military leaders of many surrounding nations.

<http://www.ndu.edu/nesa/facultystaffbios/barnod.pdf> (Accessed 23 MAR 2011).

XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters deployed to form CJTF-180. From a signpost perspective, practitioners should note that the increase in scale of military offensive operations, coupled with the desire of the CENTCOM commander to transition from primarily offensive operations to full spectrum operations, resulted in a change in theater structure that required a corps headquarters to perform the role of a coalition joint task force.

Iraqi Freedom, 2003-2004

Operation Iraqi Freedom initially presented U.S. and Coalition forces with traditional warfare between nation states featuring large-scale conventional forces. Once the Iraqi army was defeated, and the seizure of Baghdad was complete, the nature of the war shifted to irregular warfare, and the campaign objectives required a greater focus on stability operations. This change of mission resulted in a change of role for V Corps. According to Donald Wright, in *On Point II*, “initially a tactical headquarters from March to May 2003; by June, V Corps found itself faced with the tasks of transforming into a coalition joint task force (CJTF-7), developing a new campaign plan, planning force levels for what would become known as OIF II, and conducting operations across all three levels of war.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, this phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom brings to light the challenges associated with a corps headquarters transitioning from a tactical level headquarters to coalition joint task force headquarters with strategic, operational and tactical level responsibilities.

According to Thomas Ricks, author of *Fiasco*, it was the understanding of the CENTCOM and CFLCC commanders that the Coalition Political Authority (CPA) would lead postwar operations until a new Iraqi Government could be formed, with military forces providing limited support to the CPA and focused more on conducting offensive and defensive operations to

⁶⁷ Wright, *On Point II*, 164.

establish security.⁶⁸ However, understaffed, and suffering from short term rotations of personnel, the CPA was incapable of providing the requisite oversight for leading postwar operations, relying heavily on CJTF-7 staff support. Providing a greater amount of support to the CPA than previously anticipated overtaxed the capacity of the newly formed, and undermanned, CJTF-7 staff.⁶⁹ Adding to the issue of limited staff capacity was the imperative for creating a secure environment before the CPA transitioned control to the Interim Iraqi government. From the summer of 2003 to the summer of 2004, the CJTF-7 Staff and CPA would continue to struggle with developing a new campaign plan that aimed at creating a secure environment amidst a growing insurgency, while developing the necessary theater structures required for providing support to the new Iraqi government.⁷⁰

In the summer of 2003 the CENTCOM and CJTF-7 commanders were working to address the manning shortages within the CJTF-7 staff, stop the redeployment of various units due to new force requirements, and preparing for extended operations in Iraq. The shortage of personnel with the CJTF-7 staff meant that a section would have to stop work on one project to respond to an emerging crisis or opportunity.⁷¹ As many of the personnel with experience had left when CFLCC departed the theater, the final CJTF-7 manning contrasted sharply with the CFLCC

⁶⁸ Thomas Ricks further explains that “the CPA and military had different conceptions of what the U.S. was doing in Iraq. The CPA was oriented on changing the politics, economy and culture of Iraq, while the military focus during the period of 2003-2004 was to win the conflict, capture Saddam, and provide a secure environment.” Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Adventure in Iraq* (New York, Penguin Group, 2006), 210. In Rick’s view, the CPA and military were at odds with one another from the onset of the relationship. Additionally, General Franks stated that he felt “Ambassador Jerry Bremer would bring the requisite set of skills to the much more political environment, allowing the military focus on providing security and working with the Iraqi police and new Iraqi army.” Franks, *American Soldier*, 532-533.

⁶⁹ Wright, *On Point II*, 160.

⁷⁰ The CPA was created in May 2003, during the same period V Corps was transitioning to CJTF-7. The CPA’s official mission was to “restore conditions of safety and stability, to create conditions in which the Iraqi people could safely determine their own political future, and to facilitate economic recovery, and sustainable reconstruction and development.” Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 153-158.

⁷¹ Wright, *A Different Kind of War*, 160. According to Major General Thomas Miller, CJTF-7 Chief of Operations, “the day-to-day fight, the turmoil of transition...and all the other unforeseen tasks (Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, Police, Iranian Mujahedin-e, Khalq forces, etc.), and then the enormous tasks of orchestrating a force rotation from OIF I to OIF II, completely consumed the undermanned CJTF-7 staff.”

staff which had general officers as the principles in most staff sections.⁷² To create a staff that reflected the joint and coalition composition of the military forces in Iraq, Lieutenant General Sanchez reached out to British and Australian armies within theater to provide additional staff members and representation of the forces within Iraq. Also, recognizing that direct support to the CPA was the most important role for CJTF-7, Lieutenant General Sanchez located himself and a small command element with the CPA headquarters in Baghdad to facilitate planning and coordination efforts, while his deputy Major General Wojdakowski was located with the CJTF-7 main command post at Baghdad International Airport. This accomplished the key liaison requirements with the CPA, while relieving pressure on the undermanned staff by reducing the number of liaison personnel required.⁷³

Adding to the challenge of generating the CJTF-7 staff was the requirement to develop a new campaign plan that addressed the changing nature of the environment, as well as providing greater emphasis on stability and civil-military operations. During the initial months after its creation, CJTF-7 conducted operations in Iraqi based on two previously developed campaign plans, while creating a third which continuously evolved due to the instability within Iraq. The first operations plan (OPLAN) was COBRA II, written before the war, which guided offensive operations to remove the Saddam regime. The second OPLAN was ECLIPSE II which was written by CFLCC after the start of the war, and was designed to guide full spectrum operations after the fall of Saddam. However, as the security situation deteriorated after the fall of Saddam, ECLIPSE II became irrelevant, as the environment within Iraqi differed greatly from the

⁷² Thomas Ricks provides a description of the staff shortcoming by explaining that the CFLCC headquarters had spent months studying the issues with Iraq, and was attuned to the tribal and cultural structure of Iraq. When CFLCC and the majority of V Corps departed Iraq during the summer of 2003, the experience level and knowledge base departed as well. Ricks, *Fiasco*, 157. Additionally, Donald Wright, quoting Major General Wojdakowski, further explains that “To put it in perspective, I think the Combined Forces Land Component (CFLCC) had six general officers in it. When CFLCC left on 15 June 2003, there was one general officer in the CJTF-7 command post and that was me. When I left there on 1 February 2004...there were 19 general officers...So we had to elevate the corps up to a CJTF staff.” Wright, *On Point II*, 157

⁷³ Wright, *On Point II*, 155-169.

anticipated environment within the campaign plan. In short, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, commander CJTF-7, continued to emphasize offensive operations in accordance with the COBRA II OPLAN, while creating a new campaign plan that addressed the transition from offensive operations to stability operations.⁷⁴ In January 2004, the new campaign plan was published which addressed the change in the operational environment from traditional warfare to irregular warfare, and called for continued offensive operations to create a secure and stable environment, while adding additional focus on stability operations in direct support of the CPA.⁷⁵

The changing nature of the environment also signaled the need for an increase of force requirements as opposed to the anticipated decrease in forces required during stability operations. The emerging tasks of securing Iraq's borders, securing and destroying a massive number of ammunition depots around Iraq, and guarding key infrastructure quickly consumed all forces available in Iraq. To meet the new force requirements, Lieutenant General Sanchez orchestrated two actions; the first was to work with the CENTCOM commander to delay redeployment of forces currently in Iraq, and develop a force deployment schedule to replace units that had served in Iraq for one year. The second action was to create the Iraqi Civil Defense battalions to assist coalition forces with the myriad of security tasks.⁷⁶

In June 2004, United Nations (UN) Resolution 1546 was passed which “sanctioned the end of the coalition’s occupation of Iraq, directed the creation of an Interim Iraqi Government,

⁷⁴ Wright, *On Point II*, 162-165.

⁷⁵ The CJTF-7 mission statement for the new campaign demonstrates the revised campaign objectives. “Conduct offensive operations to defeat remaining noncompliant forces and neutralize destabilizing influences in the AO in order to create a secure environment in direct support of the CPA. Concurrently conduct stability operations to support the establishment of government and economic development in order to set the conditions for a transfer of operations designated follow-on military or civilian authorities.” Wright, *On Point II*, 163.

⁷⁶ According to Major General Wojdaowski, Deputy Commander CJTF-7, “as a corps, we certainly had enough force to take down the regime and had enough forces at corps to execute our stability operations. We ended up not doing that because we took on the mission of the entire country. It became pretty obvious to Lieutenant General Sanchez and me by about 1 July 2003 that we would need at least as much force, maybe more than we had, in order to continue operations without beginning to get behind on countering this insurgency.” Wright, *On Point II*, 165-179.

and set a schedule for a series of elections beginning in late 2004.⁷⁷ Unfortunately for CJTF-7, a secure environment failed to exist, and the CPA had departed after transitioning control to the Interim Iraqi Government. This left CJTF-7 with the additional tasks of training the Iraqi Army, and re-establishing political-military relationships with the Interim Iraqi Government. This proved a difficult task for CJTF-7 to accomplish. Undermanned and lacking the requisite experience for conducting operations across all three levels war led Lieutenant General Sanchez and General John Abizaid, the CENTCOM commander, to consider the creation of an additional headquarters that had the experience and capacity to function at the theater strategic level, and manage the political and military operations.⁷⁸ Ultimately the result was the creation of a sub-unified command designed to focus on the strategic level political and military aspects of the Iraq campaign, enabling CJTF-7 (later to be designated as the Multi-National Corps-Iraq: MNC-I) to focus on the tactical/operational level aspects of full spectrum operations.⁷⁹

Iraqi Freedom Signpost Summary

Operation Iraqi Freedom provides three signposts that demonstrate when the operational environment requires the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations, the corps may function as a joint task force headquarters for a relatively short period until a four-star headquarters is established. The specific signposts are the theater structure, the nature of the operational environment, and the campaign objectives. With respect to the theater structure, the CENTCOM commander's decision to elevate V Corps to a collation joint task force was not a pre-planned

⁷⁷ Wright, *On Point II*, 176-177.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 172. According to Wright, General Abizaid felt that the primary challenge was that CJTF-7 was a single headquarters responsible for conducting coalition operations across three levels of war. Specifically, he wanted to create a four-star headquarters, that would report to CENTCOM, provide direct support to the coalition political authority (CPA), coordinate, synchronize and deliver security, economic, diplomatic and information operations with the U.S. Embassy and the new Iraqi Government, leaving tactical combat operations to its subordinate headquarters. Wright, citing the Chief Commander's Initiatives Group, *Multi-National Force-Iraq, Building a Strategic Headquarters: Operations Research and Support to the Theater Commander*, Briefing, 44th AORS, 11-13 October 2005, slide 7.

⁷⁹ Wright, *On Point II*, 172-173.

event. Thus the change came as a surprise to General Wallace, and consequentially the V Corps staff was not adequately manned or trained to perform the role effectively. So from a signpost perspective, while this event was not anticipated at the time, future practitioners should acknowledge the potential in future training exercises, as well as campaign planning. With respect to the nature of the operational environment, following the collapse of the Saddam regime, the emergence of an insurgency required U.S. and coalition forces to continue large-scale offensive operations. While this requirement has historically resulted in a corps headquarters performing the role of an intermediate tactical command, V Corps had already transitioned to CJTF-7, and was the highest headquarters available at the time. Additionally, the CENTCOM commander wanted the campaign to begin transition to full spectrum operations, with a greater emphasis on reconstruction efforts, building the new Afghan Army, and coordinating security efforts with regional leaders; a scope and scale of which exceeded the capacity of the CJTF-7 staff. Thus a sub-unified command was created to focus on the strategic level tasks civil-military tasks, allowing the corps headquarters to focus on operational and tactical level security tasks. Again, from a signpost perspective, practitioners should note that when the corps headquarters is performing the role of a CJTF, if the nature of the operational environment requires large-scale operations, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of full spectrum operations, then a role transition is on the horizon.

Section Conclusions-Joint Task Force Headquarters

Historical analysis of a corps headquarters performing the role of a joint task force headquarters in Operation Uphold Democracy, Operations Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, presents practitioners with several examples of how the scope of campaign requirements and the scale of forces involved influence the role of a corps headquarters over time. Additionally, these operations highlight the challenges associated with this role, which are affected by planning and preparation time, manning shortages, and requisite experience levels.

With an eye towards the signposts, Operation Uphold Democracy demonstrates that when the nature of the operational environment requires only small-scale (one ground division) forces, and the campaign objectives only require offensive and defensive operations, then the corps will perform the role of a JTF. Furthermore, Operation Uphold Democracy demonstrates that when given adequate preparation and planning time (9 months), as well as adequate manning (staff reflected the forces within the JTF), a corps headquarters can perform the role effectively. Conversely, Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom demonstrate that when the nature of the operational environment requires large-scale (more than one ground division) forces, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of full spectrum operations, then the corps will perform the role of a JTF for relatively short period of time until a four-star command is established. Additionally, both operations demonstrate that when a corps headquarters is given a relatively short period of time for planning and preparation (two months or less), and inadequate manning (force cap for CJTF-180, and V Corps transition to CJTF-7), these factors further exacerbate the challenges of managing large-scale full spectrum operations. Furthermore, while Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom clearly demonstrate that corps headquarters lack the capacity to conduct large-scale full spectrum operations across the levels of war, it brings to light the requirement for echelons of command to effect a distribution of labor across the levels of war, hence the creation of sub-unified commands in each theater over time. From a future practitioner perspective, the most salient point to extract from the analysis of these three operations is that if the future operational environment requires the U.S. to conduct multiple major combat operations within the same theater of war, consequentially requiring the theater army to support each, then a corps headquarters might well be required to perform the role of CJTF, conducting large-scale full spectrum operations for a period of time until a four-star command is created. When this occurs, the corps headquarters may be required to perform the role of a land component command, or an Army force headquarters.

The Corps as Land Component Command with ARFOR Responsibilities

This section identifies the doctrinal requirements for a corps headquarters performing the role of a land component command (LCC), and examines the V Corps headquarters performing this role within the historical context of Operation Iraqi Freedom, following the creation of a sub-unified four-star command. This section demonstrates that when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time, followed by transition to a land component command headquarters with Army force headquarters responsibilities.

According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff publication, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations*, 2004, a corps headquarters can be designated as a land component command “anytime the forces of two or more military departments operate in the same domain.”⁸⁰ When the mission requires the capabilities and functions of more than one service to achieve related land objectives, to maintain unity of effort, the corps headquarters may function as the land component command and provide direction and control of land based operations.⁸¹ In this role, the corps functions as an operational level headquarters, and commands and controls all land forces during a campaign or major operation which may include controlling multiple Army, Marine Corps, and multinational division-and brigade-sized formations.⁸² Primary tasks for the corps headquarters operating in this role consist of providing command and control of joint force projection into the assigned area of operations; reception-staging-onward

⁸⁰ U.S., CJCS, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations* (St Louis, MO: U.S. Army AG Publication Center SL, 2004), 4-3. With respect to a corps headquarters the specific domain is the land domain.

⁸¹ Ibid, I-4, I-7. Land operations are described as the employment of land forces, supported by maritime and air forces (as appropriate) to control vital areas of the land domain.

⁸² U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 4-3.

movement-integration; preparation of the ground campaign plan, command and control of the ground forces executing the plan; land-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; force protection for all U.S. land forces and designated government/nongovernmental agencies' resources, and multinational land forces; logistical support for land forces, and land based missile defense.⁸³ The significance of this role is that the corps is responsible for all land forces in the theater, and instead of planning engagements and battles, planning at this level focuses on major operations that support the theater campaign plan. Figure 3 depicts the corps headquarters as a joint force land component command within a theater of operations.

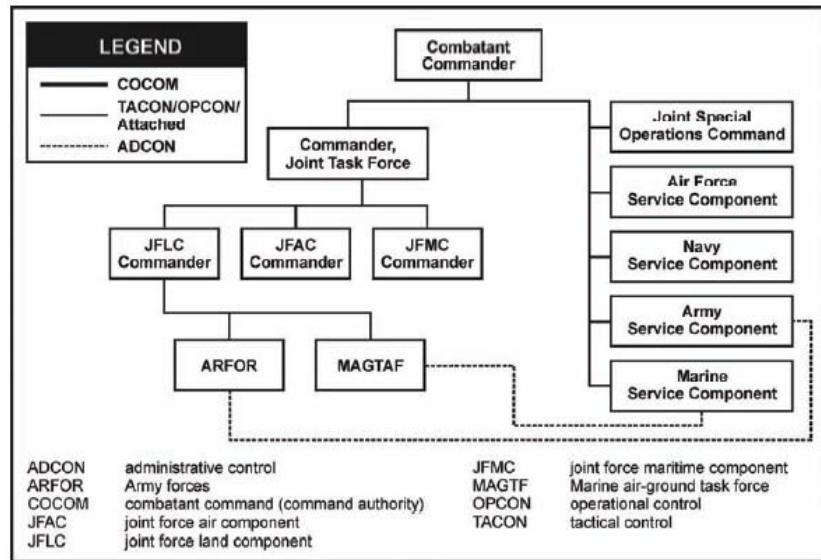


Figure 3 - The Corps as a Joint Force Land Component Command⁸⁴

While the ARFOR is depicted as a separate force, depending upon the mission requirements of the subordinate headquarters, the corps may retain ARFOR responsibilities while functioning as the land component command.

⁸³ U.S., CJCS, *Joint Force Land Component Handbook*, 2005, 1-1 thru 1-5, Annex A, and Joint Publication, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations*, 2004, 3-31, II-6, II, 7, III-8.

⁸⁴ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 4-4.

U.S. Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations, 2008*, defines an Army Forces headquarters (ARFOR) as “the Army service component headquarters for a joint task force or a joint and multinational force.”⁸⁵ The primary function of the ARFOR is to serve as the “conduit for Army service-related issues and administrative support through administrative control (ADCON).”⁸⁶ A corps headquarters may be assigned this role by the joint force commander when the corps commander is the senior Army headquarters commander in a joint task force. When assigned this role, the corps headquarters is responsible for the administrative control of all Army forces so designated by the combatant commander. As an example, if the corps headquarters is performing the role of a joint land force component commander, and the corps headquarters is the senior Army headquarters, then the corps headquarters becomes the ARFOR for not only the Army divisions and brigade combat teams attached to the corps, but also has responsibility for all other Army units within the joint task force.⁸⁷ These responsibilities include managing the task organization of all Army forces in theater, providing personnel and administrative authority to all Army units in theater, conducting in-theater training for Army forces, implementing theater maintenance programs, coordinating external maintenance support for Army forces, and performing property accountability functions.⁸⁸ Additionally, the corps may perform this role in conjunction with other roles such as an intermediate tactical headquarters or a joint force land component; the latter of which is described in the following sub-section using Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical context.

⁸⁵ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, B-1.

⁸⁶ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0*, B-1, and *FM 3-0.1*, 4-1. ADCON is a service authority, not a joint authority, which means this type of control is only exercised by an organization’s particular service headquarters, i.e. Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps. “ADCON is the “direction or exercise of authority over subordinate or other organizations in respect to administration and support, including organization of Service forces, control of resources and equipment, personnel management, unit logistics, individual and unit training, readiness, mobilization, demobilization, discipline, and other matters not included in the operational missions of the subordinate or other organizations.” U.S. Army, *FM 1-02*, 1-3.

⁸⁷ U.S. Army, *FM 3-0.1*, 4-1, B-8.

⁸⁸ U.S., CJCS, *Joint Force Land Component Handbook*, B-5.

Iraqi Freedom, 2004-2005

Between 2003 and 2004, the V Corps headquarters performed two roles, initially as a tactical headquarters for the initial phases of the ground war, followed by a transition to the role of coalition joint task force (CJTF-7) and the campaign focus shifted from offensive operations to stability operations. In 2004, the CJTF-7 headquarters was still undermanned and lacked the requisite experience for conducting full spectrum operations across the levels of war. The competing demands of countering the growing insurgency while simultaneously providing political-military oversight in support of the Interim Iraqi Government led the CENTCOM commander, General John Abizaid, to create an additional headquarters that had the experience and capacity to function at the theater strategic level, and manage political-military operations. The result was the creation of a sub-unified command designated as Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), and the subsequent transition of CJTF-7 to Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I).⁸⁹ This section focuses on the role of III Corps, as the first corps headquarters to perform the role of a multinational land component headquarters, subordinate to the newly established Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I).

In September 2003, III Corps was notified that it would deploy and establish the MNC-I headquarters. Planning for the new role consisted of a series of pre-deployment site surveys to Iraq, Battle Command Training Program exercises, and Joint Forces command seminars to prepare the corps headquarters for full spectrum operations as multinational headquarters and land component command. Once deployed to Iraq, the III Corps commander, Lieutenant General Thomas Metz, initially served as deputy to Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, and focused on land operations vice force sustainment issues until the MNF-I and MNC-I headquarters were established. In July 2004, MNC-I became operational and exercised command and control of

⁸⁹ Wright, *On Point II*, 172-174.

regionally focused multinational divisions and separate brigades that accounted for all conventional ground forces in Iraq.⁹⁰

The theater structure enabled MNC-I to focus on the tactical and operational level aspects of the campaign, as MNF-I focused on the theater-strategic aspects of providing direct support to the coalition and political authority as well as to the Interim Iraqi Government. Specifically, MNF-I “coordinated, synchronized, and delivered security, economic, diplomatic, and information operations with the U.S. Embassy and the new Iraqi Government, leaving tactical level combat operations to its subordinate units.” The commander of MNF-I reported directly to CENTCOM, and provided oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, which was heavily involved in the reconstruction of Iraq. Additionally, MNF-I commanded two three-star headquarters, MNC-I, which controlled tactical-level military operations, and MNSTC-I, which exercised authority over the programs that were organizing, equipping, training, and advising the Iraqi Security Forces, as well as rebuilding Iraq’s Ministry of Defense and other military infrastructure. As the highest military authority in theater, MNF-I delegated authority by directing the U.S. divisions and coalition units to report to MNC-I.⁹¹

As the operational arm of MNF-I, MNC-I did not create theater campaign plans, but executed major operations in support of MNF-I’s campaign plan. In this role Lieutenant General Metz viewed his function as more of a “resource provider vice the executor of tactical level operations.”⁹² When operations required more centralized control, MNC-I provided greater emphasis on the tactical level aspects of moving forces throughout Iraq in support of operations. As an example, the largest traditional battle conducted during III Corps’ term as MNC-I was Operation AI FAJR (or New Dawn). The objective was to destroy Sunni insurgents that had taken

⁹⁰ Wright, *On Point II*, 172-174.

⁹¹ Ibid, 170-175. Wright, citing the Commander’s Initiative Group, Multi-National Force-Iraq, *Building a Strategic Headquarters: Operations Research Support to the Theater Commander Briefing*, 44th AORS, 11-13 October 2005, Slide 7.

⁹² Ibid, 174. Wright, citing Lieutenant General Metz.

over the town of Fallujah. Planning for the operation required MNC-I to coordinate, resource, and synchronize the efforts of coalition military units and Iraqi Army forces. Additionally, MNC-I was required to coordinate with interim Iraqi government in order to ensure the operation accomplished the requisite offensive, stability, and reconstruction requirements achieve long-term success in Fallujah. A more non-traditional operation conducted by MNC-I was to provide security for the 2005 Iraqi elections. This required the MNC-I staff to identify cities that required increased security in support of the elections, and assist Iraqi Army forces with establishing security for the elections.⁹³ For both major operations conducted by MNC-I during its first year of existence, the corps performed functions similar to those associated with an intermediate tactical level command, the variance being the scale of forces assigned, and the size of the area of responsibility –all land operations within Iraq.

Iraqi Freedom-Signpost Summary and Conclusions

The historical context explored in this section highlights three signposts that assist corps practitioners with anticipating the corps headquarters performing the role of a multinational land component command; these are nature of the threat, the campaign objectives, and the theater structure. First, although the nature of the war transitioned from traditional to irregular, the growing insurgency was active throughout Iraq. This required U.S., coalition and Iraqi army forces to periodically conduct large-scale offensive operations. Second, the campaign focus had shifted to stability operations which required greater emphasis on theater-strategic civil-military operations to assist the Iraqi Army and Interim Iraqi Government. The growing insurgency posed

⁹³ Wright, *On Point II*, 172-174. Wright, citing Lieutenant General Metz, Commander MNC-I, “I have often said that at this level, it becomes much more that you are a resource provider as a corps commander more than tweaking the tactical level.” However, Colonel Wayne Grigsby, a former corps headquarters practitioner in Afghanistan and current director of the U.S. Army Advanced Military Studies Program, disagrees with General Metz and asserts that when performing this role, the corps is a warfighting headquarters, not simply a resource provider; meaning that regardless of the nature of the environment, the corps headquarters commands and controls all land forces during a campaign or major operation which may include controlling multiple Army, Marine Corps, and multinational division-and brigade-sized formations.

a significant threat to U.S. and coalition political-military efforts and required a greater focus, as the Iraqi Army was unable to provide security during this period. Managing the competing demands of fighting the insurgency, training the Iraqi Army, and providing civil-military support exceeded CJTF-7's capacity. Thus an additional echelon was added to the theater structure that enabled the distribution of labor between three headquarters, MNF-I as the theater command, MNC-I as the tactical/operational command, and MNSTC-I as the Iraqi Army training command.

From a signpost perspective, the transition of CJTF-7 to a land component command demonstrates that practitioners must consider all three signposts when anticipating the corps performing this role. If practitioners simply focus on the signpost of multiple divisions, they might anticipate that the corps would perform the role of an intermediate tactical command, as there were multiple divisions employed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. To avoid this pitfall requires practitioners to identify the number of corps, or three-star headquarters, employed in support of the campaign, their function within the theater structure, and the types of operations required to accomplish the campaign objectives. With respect to the corps headquarters' role in the later phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom, practitioners can infer that when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time, followed by transition to a land component command headquarters with Army force headquarters responsibilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

You can't take a tactical headquarters [V Corps] and change it into an operational [level] headquarters [CJTF-7] at the snap of your fingers. It just doesn't happen. Your focus changes completely, and you are either going to take your eye off the tactical fight in order to deal with the operational issues, or you are going to ignore the operational issues and stay involved in the tactical fight.

General William S. Wallace⁹⁴

The purpose of this study was not to provide a Nastradamus-style prediction for the future role of a corps headquarters. However, acknowledging that the future is uncertain, and that preparing to perform multiple roles effectively presents numerous training challenges, it was the aim of the study to provide future corps practitioners with a historical framework for inquiry that can assist with anticipating the future role of a corps headquarters. The framework employed three signposts to assist practitioners with inquiry; which were the nature of the operational environment, the campaign objectives, and the theater structure. To validate the framework logic, the study presented analysis of four historical contexts featuring the corps headquarters performing single or multiple doctrinal roles; which were Operations Desert Storm, Uphold Democracy, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

By employing the signpost framework, the assessment of this study provides three lines of logic that can be used to anticipate the future role of a corps headquarters. The first line of logic is when the operational environment presents traditional warfare, and the campaign objectives require the conduct of large-scale offensive and defensive operations with multiple divisions and corps, then a corps headquarters will perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters. The historical contexts that demonstrated this logic were Operation Desert Storm and the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom, which featured corps headquarters performing the role as an intermediate tactical headquarters, providing an additional echelon of command and control between the divisions and the theater army. The second line of logic is when the

⁹⁴ Wright, *On Point II*, 30. Wright, citing General William S. Wallace. Interview with the Contemporary Operations Study Team, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 22 May 2006, 4.

operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of small-scale offensive and defensive operations with one division and one corps, the corps headquarters will perform the role of a joint task force headquarters. The historical contexts that demonstrated this logic were Operation Uphold Democracy and Operation Enduring Freedom featuring corps headquarters performing the role of a coalition joint task force for the duration of their deployment. The third line of logic is when the operational environment presents a mix of traditional and irregular warfare requiring the conduct of large-scale full spectrum operations with multiple divisions and the integration of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts, the corps headquarters may perform the role of a joint task force for a relatively short period of time, followed by transition to a land component command headquarters. More complicated than the previous two, this line of logic was developed referencing the historical context of Operation Iraqi Freedom during the period of transition from offensive operations to large-scale full spectrum operations. Initially an intermediate tactical headquarters, V Corps transitioned to CJTF-7 and performed this role for approximately one year until a four-star sub-unified command was created, which resulted in CJTF-7 transitioning to a land component command.

Collectively the lines of logic support *FM 100-15* and *FM 3-0.1*, with respect to the evolving role of a corps headquarters throughout the duration of a campaign, but Operation Desert Storm provides the best example of how to employ the signpost framework, as this operation featured corps headquarters performing all four doctrinal roles over time. To provide an example of how to employ the signpost framework, the following questions use Operation Iraqi Freedom as the historical reference to assist practitioners with positing the following questions to identify the future role of a corps headquarters: will the operation require the use of large-scale land forces (indicates intermediate tactical or land component command); will the operation require primarily offensive or defensive operations, or full spectrum operations (indicates joint task force and land component command); are there multiple operations occurring within a single

combatant command's AOR requiring the theater army to provide support to both (indicates joint task force or land component command); which theater of war, if there are multiple theaters of war, is the economy of force (indicates joint task force or land component command); and are the political aims to maintain a small-scale presence initially, and then transition to large-scale full spectrum operations (indicates joint task force and transition to land component command).

While these questions provide an example using one historical context for reference, the assessment presented in this study was developed using four historical contexts. Based on the historical trends identified in the study, there is great potential for a corps headquarters to perform the role of a joint task force headquarters and a land component command in the future.

Recommendations

Based on the assessment, and supported by the *Army Operating Concept*, the future role of a corps headquarters is to function as either a joint task force, or a land component command.⁹⁵ However, performing the role of a joint task force headquarters has presented several challenges to corps practitioners, most notably during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. To prevent a repeat of the shortcomings experienced during both operations requires corps practitioners to focus training efforts on preparing corps commanders and staffs for the complexities associated with each role. Fortunately, the Joint Forces Command, responsible for training corps headquarters, is currently training corps headquarters to perform the role of a multinational corps, similar to a land component command.⁹⁶ However, while this serves an important purpose for preparing corps for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, recent events countries such as Libya and Haiti have the potential to require a corps headquarters to function as

⁹⁵ Specifically, the Army Operating Concept states that "corps headquarters are the Army's primary operational level headquarters, but may also serve as an intermediate tactical headquarters. *The United States Army Operating Concept 2016-2028*, 2010, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (United States Army, Training and Doctrine Command Fort Monroe, 2010) 23.

⁹⁶ Colonel Paschal, Joint Forces Command J-7 Staff, telephone interview with author, 18 February 2011.

a joint task force headquarters. To perform this role effectively requires corps headquarters, as well as higher commands such as combatant commanders and theater armies, to focus on three areas; training for both roles, adequate preparation time, assisting with manning requirements, and providing the requisite experience level to achieve campaign objectives.

Corps must train on multiple roles, specifically as a joint task force headquarters and a land component command. Additionally, the training regimen must focus on preparing corps headquarters to transition between roles. As Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrated, the transition from intermediate tactical headquarters to joint task force headquarters was essentially doomed from onset. Not only was the V Corps leadership surprised by the CENTCOM commander's decision to remove Third Army from the theater of war, the majority of V Corps staff was redeploying as well, leaving the new commander, Lieutenant General Sanchez, with a shortage of manning and experience. The short transition time, coupled with the requirement to create a new joint task force staff prevented the newly created CJTF-7 from effectively performing its role.

Effective transitions between roles require adequate preparation time. As Operation Uphold Democracy demonstrated, when the XVIII Airborne Corps was notified of its mission in Haiti, 9 months in advance, the corps commander and staff were able to effectively execute one of two contingency operations. With respect to Operation Desert Storm, VII Corps was notified 2 months in advance of their mission, however, they were well trained to perform the role of an intermediate tactical headquarters; fortunately Saddam cooperated by not attacking into Saudi Arabia, allowing the VII corps to conduct additional training in the desert prior to beginning the ground offensive. The XVIII Airborne Corps was not so fortunate during Operation Enduring Freedom, when notified 2 months in advance that the corps would deploy as a coalition joint task force with a manning restriction that limited the number of personnel available to for the CJTF-180 staff.

Effective role performance requires adequate manning, in the forms of number of personnel and experience. This may sound a bit contrite, but number of personnel will always be

an issue, force caps and forces available are difficult to overcome. Consequentially, rapid transitions will present a period of time when joint manning documents must be refined and personnel marshaled to provide support to new staffs. However, these factors can be minimized if corps practitioners anticipate the transition early in the planning cycle and determine the number and type of personnel required to enable the staff to function effectively. The critical factor is having a staff that reflects the composition of the forces the corps headquarters must control. As the transition of V corps to CJTF-7 demonstrates, during a long campaign, the requirement to redeploy personnel after one year of service in theater will result in a hollow staff that lacks experience. Anticipating this transition could have enabled a staggered exit and resupply of personnel over time. The second factor for manning is that of experience; the experience of the staff to perform the requisite tasks for each role, as well as experience within the region associated with the theater of war. The V Corps transition to CJTF-7, coupled with the exit of Third Army from theater resulted in a reduced number of General Officers on the staff, as well as the subject matter experts within Third Army's staff. While these shortcomings were essentially beyond the control of V Corps and the future staff of CJTF-7, it must be noted that this particular situation represents a failure in leadership at higher levels, specifically within the theater army and combatant command. While it is the responsibility of corps headquarters to be prepared to perform any of the four doctrinal roles, higher leaders are equally responsible to ensure they set the conditions that will enable successful role transitions.

In summary, the difficulty of anticipating transition from one role to the next is due in part to a limited ability to train on all aspects of each role, minimal preparation time to effect the transition, and inadequate staff capacity due to shortage of personnel and lack of experience. While these are certainly critical requirements to ensure effective role performance, the fundamental cause of each is the failure to anticipate the initial and succeeding role of the corps headquarters given the evolving context of the conflict. Essentially it is a failure to identify the signposts along the road to war, and during the war, that indicate a change in role is approaching,

and appropriate actions must be taken to ensure an effective transition occurs. Future corps headquarters practitioners would be wise to recognize the signposts that indicate the future role of the corps.

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